

Reply to Office Action of November 23, 2007

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 6-12 and 16-26 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 6, 10-12 and 16 are amended and claims 25-26 are added.

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the interview conducted on February 25, 2008. The substance of the interview, including any agreements reached, are reflected in the above amendments and the following remarks. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

I. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Office Action rejects claims 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The Office Action also rejects claims 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly indefinite. Claims 10-12 have been amended in response to the Examiner's comments. It is respectfully submitted that, as agreed during the interview, claims 10-12 as amended meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs. Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Office Action rejects claims 6-9, 16-20 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,626,013 to Ohta et al. (hereinafter "Ohta"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 6 is directed to a method of controlling a door of a drum type washing machine. The method includes comparing in a controller of the washing machine a sensed water level to a reference water level previously stored in the controller, and locking or unlocking a

door based on a result of this comparison between the sensed water level and the reference water level.

Independent claim 16 is also directed to a method of controlling a door of a drum type washing machine. The method includes unlocking a door when a controller determines that power is not applied to a washing machine, and determining whether water is present in a washing tub of the washing machine when the controller determines that power is applied using a water level sensor. The method also includes unlocking the door when the controller determines that water is not present in the washing tub, and sensing a water level in the washing tub using the water level sensor when the controller determines that water is present in the washing tub and, locking or unlocking the door based on the sensed water level. As discussed during the interview, Ohta neither discloses nor suggests the features of independent claims 6 and 16, or the respective claimed combinations.

Ohta discloses a top loading washing machine including vertically positioned tubs 4 and 6 open at top ends thereof to receive laundry items. A water level sensor 19 detects a water level in the tub 6 to turn on/off a water supply, and a cover opened/closed sensor 20 senses an opened/closed state of a cover 2 that extends across the top openings of the tubs 4, 6. A cover locking mechanism 21 locks the cover 2 as appropriate, and a whirling sensor 22 senses rotation of the tub 6. Operation of the washing machine is controlled by first and second microprocessors 35 and 45.

Before moving from a first washing step to a first dehydrating step (i.e., a high speed spin cycle), the opened/closed sensor 20 senses an opened/closed state of the cover 2. If the cover 2 is open, the microprocessor 35 temporarily stops the cycle until a user closes the cover 2 and presses a start button to resume the cycle. Thus, the cover 2 is unlocked and may be opened at will during the washing step, when the tub 6 is essentially full of water, and the cover 2 is necessarily locked during the high speed spin cycle, when there is essentially no water in the tub 6, to prevent a user from putting hands/arms into the tub 6 during the high speed spin cycle.

Similarly, as the machine moves into the high speed spin cycle, the whirling sensor 22 detects a whirl of the tub 6. The microprocessor 35 cuts power to the motor to stop the spinning of the tub 6, and releases the cover locking mechanism 21 so that the user can open the cover 2 and redistribute items in the tub 6 to correct unbalance if the detected whirl is high. The user must then close the cover 2 and press the start button to resume the cycle. Thus, the cover 2 may only be unlocked (once it is locked) in response to an excessive amount of whirl detected by the whirling sensor 22.

As discussed during the interview, Ohta neither discloses nor suggests that the microprocessor 35 locks or unlocks the cover 2 based on a comparison between a sensed and a reference water level, or on a sensed water level, as recited in independent claims 6 and 16, respectively. Rather, Ohta's washing machine is a top loading machine, and thus a water level in the tub 6 has no bearing on whether or not the cover 2 could or should be opened or remain locked, as there would be no detrimental effect in opening the cover 2 if the tub 6 is full of

water. In fact, as discussed during the interview, Ohta actually discloses the opposite. That is, Ohta clearly discloses that the cover 2 remains unlocked during the first washing step, when the tub 6 is full of water. The cover 2 is not locked until the cycle enters the first dehydrating step, at which point it can only be unlocked in the event of unbalance detected by the whirling sensor 22. Thus, a sensed water level, or a comparison of such a sensed water level to a reference water level, is at no time considered by the microprocessor 35 when determining whether to lock or unlock the cover 2.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 6 and 16 are not anticipated by Ohta, and thus the rejection of independent claims 6 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Ohta should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 7-9, 17-20 and 23 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 6 and 16, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,802,884 to Cavalli (hereinafter "Cavalli"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Dependent claim 21 is allowable over Ohta at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 16, from which it depends, as well as for its added features. Further, Cavalli is merely cited as allegedly teaching monitoring a rotating speed of an output shaft to control a rotating speed of a washing basket, and thus fails to overcome the deficiencies of Ohta. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 21 is allowable over the applied

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combination, and thus the rejection of claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ohta and Cavalli should be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 22 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ohta. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Dependent claims 22 and 24 are allowable over Ohta at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 6 and 16 from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features. It is further submitted that the features recited in claims 22 and 24 are not obvious over the disclosure provided by Ohta. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 22 and 24 are allowable over Ohta, and thus the rejection of claims 22 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ohta should be withdrawn.

IV. New Claims 25-26

New claims 25-26 are added to the application. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 25-26 meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, and are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 6 and 16, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned **Joanna K. Mason**, at the telephone number listed below.

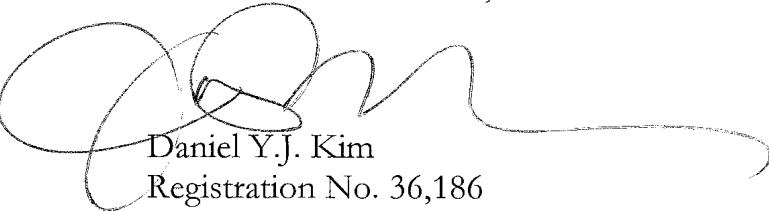
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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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